

## Governor Riley Declares State of Emergency *Voluntary Evacuations of Coastal Areas; Price Gouging Law Goes Into Effect*

MONTGOMERY - Governor Bob Riley on Monday declared an official state of emergency in Alabama due to the imminent threat posed by Hurricane Ivan. The emergency declaration enables the Governor to invoke various emergency preparedness measures including Alabama's price gouging law. Governor Riley also encouraged residents along the coast in Mobile and Baldwin counties to move inland under a voluntary evacuation.

"Our number one priority is to make sure every precaution is being taken to save lives, protect property and get people in danger out of harm's way," Governor Riley said in a briefing to the press at the state's Emergency Operating Center in Clanton. "I want everyone in Alabama to know that their state government has been monitoring this hurricane for several days and that we are as prepared as we can be to face this potential disaster."

Minutes before the briefing, the Governor met with his Cabinet and representatives of the Red Cross and National Weather Service to review the state's emergency preparedness plans and receive the latest information on the hurricane's course.

Governor Riley said the evacuations in Mobile and Baldwin counties at this time are voluntary and that any decision on whether to make the evacuations mandatory would be done after consulting with local officials and taking into account the effectiveness of the voluntary evacuations.

"There may be no need for mandatory evacuations if these voluntary evacuations are successful in getting people out of harm's way," Governor Riley said.

Governor Riley also said the state would be monitoring any price gouging and prosecute offenders.

"Gouging consumers during a time of crisis is an absolute outrage and will not be tolerated in Alabama," Governor Riley said.

Alabama's price gouging law applies only during times of a state of emergency issued by the Governor.

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*For more information, contact the Governor's Press Office at 334-242-7150.*